A REPETITION IN THE MYRMIDONS OF AESCHYLUS

I recently suggested that Mette F 224, 

Τεῦκρος δὲ τάξου χρώμενος φειδωλία, 

ὑπὲρ τάφρου πηδώντας ἐστησεν Φρύγας,

may be used to restore POx 2163, 6, and that the fragment belongs to the Myrmidons of Aeschylus 1). Although the correlation of three letters is not strong evidence for this restoration and attribution 2), an allusion in Aristophanes' Frogs to τάφρος 3), in combination with Trypho's reason for quoting the lines 4), makes the suggestion more plausible.

At line 928 of the Frogs, Euripides criticizes Aeschylus for using the words Σκάμωνδρος and τάφρος. Aristophanes seems to have the Achilleis trilogy in mind in this section of the play 5) and Euripides seems to be criticizing the overuse of the word τάφρος (it is in the plural and certainly is not one of the 'horse-cliffed' (ὑπόκρημνα) words such as γρυπαίτους and χαλκηλάτους (929). It is thus possible that Aristophanes is alluding to our fragment in which τάφρος appears (elsewhere in Aeschylus only Mette, F 201) and that, since he implies the word was overused, it is repeated in the Myrmidons.

Trypho quotes the lines because they contain a figure of speech. After the quotation, he says: εὑρητα νάρ φειδωλίαν ἄντι τοῦ ακριβεία. Trypho is illustrating a figure of speech in which the author used φειδωλία to mean 'accuracy' instead of the more common meaning 'sparing'. In the lines themselves, the word describes Teucer's success with his bow in stopping the Phrygians, who were attempting to leap over the ditch (vid. Iliad 12, Ajax and Teucer success-

1) C. P. 66 (1971), 112.
3) Aristophanes' testimony for this fragment was noticed by Wecklein, op. cit., H. J. Mette, Der verlorene Aischylos (Berlin 1963), 115, and B. Döhle, Die 'Achilleis' des Aischylos und die attische Vasenmalerei, Klio 49 (1967), 74.
4) Περὶ τρόπων 5 (Περὶ μεταλήψεως), Spengel, Rhetores Graeci III (Leipzig 1856), 195, 15.
5) For the arguments that Aristophanes had the Myrmidons in mind, see Döhle, op. cit., 74-75. and W. Schadowaldt, Aischylos' Achilleis, Hermes 71 (1936), 46, 2.
fully hold back the Trojans from the wall—the ditch is mentioned at the beginning of the book—, or *Iliad* 15, 442 ff., Teucer appears in response to his brother's call and the ditch is important in the struggle. But since Trypho implies, by explaining φειδωλία, that it is used in an unusual way 6), it seems reasonable to ask for what purpose Aeschylus employed it.

I should like to suggest that Aeschylus wished to attract attention to these lines in order to prepare for and subtly hint at the report of another event, i.e. the Phrygians' eventual success in reaching the ships and Teucer's later failure (vid. the end of *Iliad* 15, Teucer's bow is broken), and that the two reports are connected by a repetition of τάρρως. At first Teucer's accurate aim is responsible for stopping the Phrygians and his φειδωλία, sparing use of the bow, enhances the glory of the hero who is successful without consuming the full potential of his weapon. One wonders, however, why Aeschylus chose to include a report of Greek success in this play. From Mette's fragments 212A (=213, 1-4), 212B, 221, and 225, it is clear that Achilles sits in the tent and stubbornly refuses to help the Greeks. A report of victory would not make Achilles send Patroclus into battle. I think Aeschylus used the report as a foil for news of another Greek defeat 7). A repetition of τάρρως and Τεύκρως 8) in a description of an unsuccessful struggle at the ships, by recalling a context of success, would heighten the impact of defeat and thus spur Achilles to send out Patroclus 9). At the same time, because the repetition of the words recalls a passage in which Teucer's use of the bow was described as sparing, it would prepare the audience for and lighten for them the burden of hearing that Teucer was not successful.

There are numerous parallels in Aeschylus of unusual words attracting attention to passages which foreshadow later events and confirm the foreshadowing through a repetition of other words or ideas from the passages. For example, in the beginning of the *Agam.* 49 ff., the chorus describe the birds, i.e. the Atridae, lamenting over the loss of their children (50). The word for children, παιδῶν, usually

6) His other examples of μεταλλήψεως in this section are unusual verbal usages: 1) the use of θόν for ἰζῷ to describe islands, and 2) γυνή to mean 'a little girl'.
7) From Mette F 212A it is clear that the parodos includes references to defeat, e.g. the wounding of Agamemnon (vid. *Iliad* 11).
8) A repetition of Τεύκρως seems probable in the light of Aristophanes' *Frogs* 1041: Πατρόκλων Τεύκρων θυμολέοντων, . . .
9) The same speaker in the same episode could make the reports of victory and defeat. The messenger in the *Agamemnon* reports victory at Troy first and then the destruction of the Greek fleet.